

Writing with Purpose, Precision, and Pizazz

To join the audio portion, please dial:
888-810-9645, Passcode: **4432661**.

This session will begin shortly.

Tips For Participating

Webinars for AmeriCorps VISTAs

- Submit questions to the presenter at any time using the Q & A feature.
- Share tips, resources, and ideas with other attendees using the Chat feature.
- The phone line will be open later in the presentation for Questions and Answers.
- You can see the notes for this presentation by downloading the PDF or clicking on the box directly above the Adobe logo in the bottom right of the presentation box.

Welcome to Writing with Purpose, Precision, and Pizazz

Today's Team



Treci Johnson
AmeriCorps VISTA
Recruitment, Marketing,
& Outreach Specialist
CNCS



Robyn Stegman
Project Specialist
Campaign
Consultation, Inc.



Suzanne Knizner
Project Specialist
Campaign
Consultation, Inc.

Today's Agenda

- Welcome
- Personal Persuasion 101
- Tips for Persuasive Writing
- Writing with Clarity and Precision
- Questions
- Resources
- Next Steps

Today's Presenters



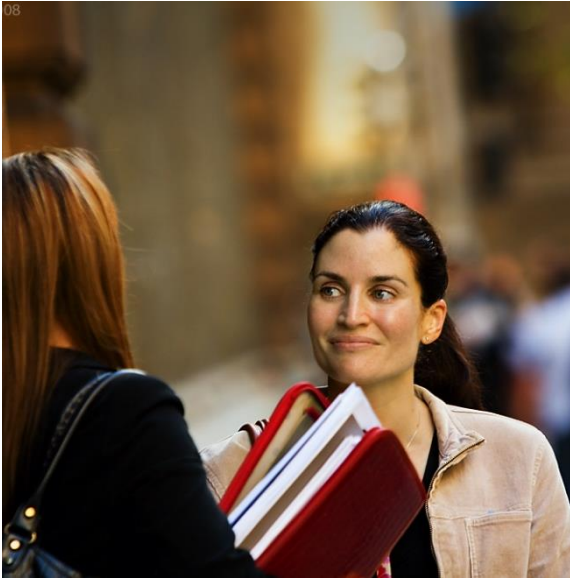
Linda Brown Rivelis
Co-Founder, President
Campaign Consultation, Inc.

Learning Objectives

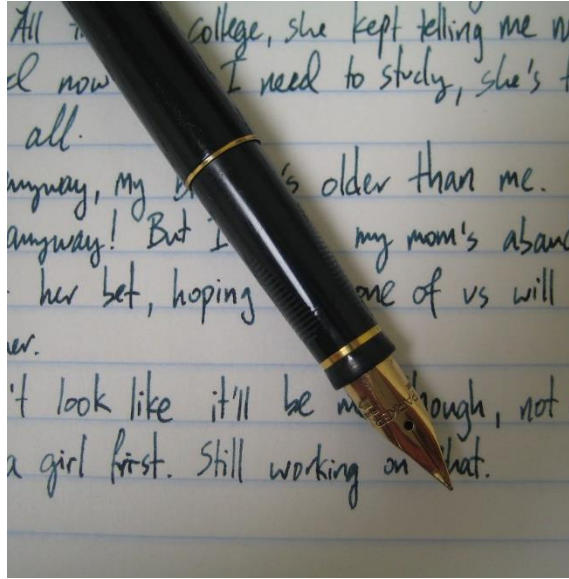
In this session you will learn how to:

- Transfer personal persuasion skills to cause persuasion purposes
- Name the six steps used per person to reach persuasion objectives
- Implement quick tips to make your writing clear and more effective

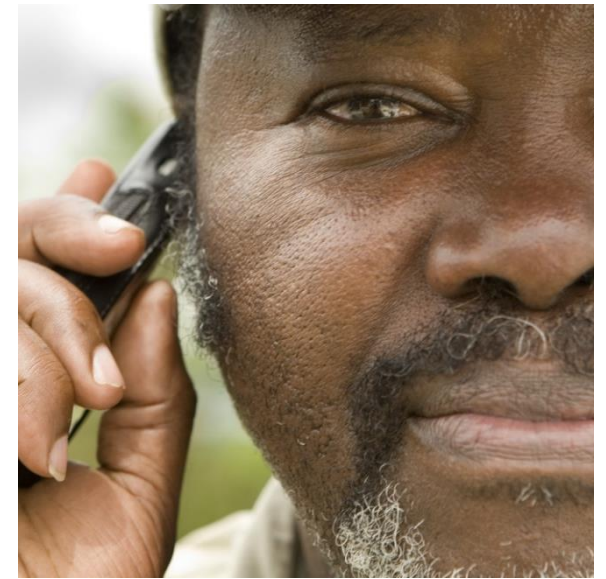
Poll: What Method is Best at Persuasion?



Face-to-Face



Written Word



Phone

Why Write?

Request support

Confirm buy-in for an idea

Motivate employees

Apply for a job

Inform news

Encourage leadership action

Remind about a meeting

Leave something tangible behind

Change behavior

Seek visibility

To Best Persuade, Identify Your Audience

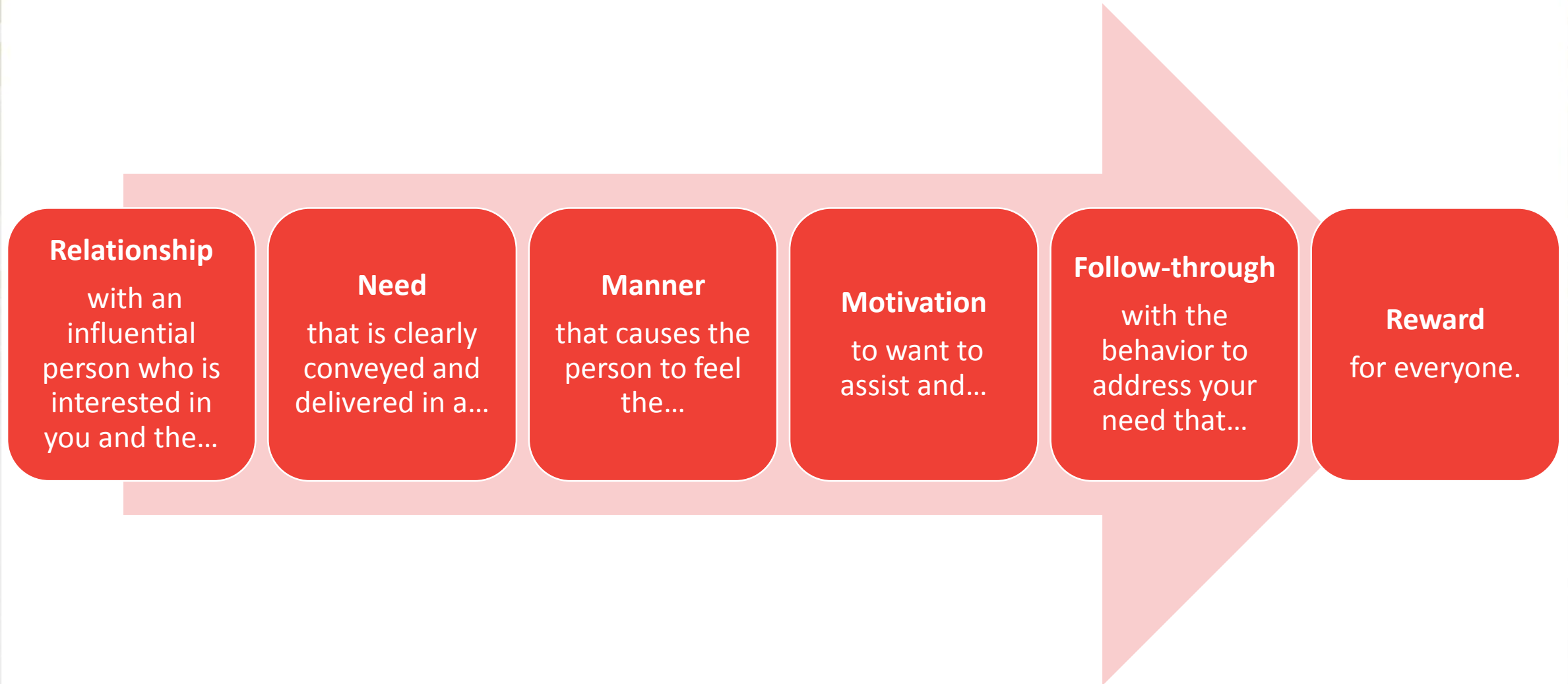
- Colleagues
- Volunteers
- Supervisors & Leadership
- Media
- Current & Prospective Donors
- Community Partners
- Other

Identifying Your Audience

- Their degree of awareness, interest, involvement with cause
- Preferences in lifestyle, hobbies, sports, etc.
- Their best period of time to contact
- Type of contact (e.g. face-to-face, telephone, written letter, email, text, LinkedIn, Facebook, letter)



Personal and Cause Persuasion *works when you have a...*



Relationship

Relationship
with an influential
person who is
interested in you and
the...



Need

Need
that is clearly
conveyed and
delivered in a...



Manner

Manner
that causes the
person to feel the...



Motivation

Motivation
to want to assist
and...



Follow-Through

Follow-through
with the behavior
to address your
need that...



Reward

Reward
for everyone.



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Personal Persuasion In Action

Relationship	Aunt and nephew
Need	Mow lawn immediately
Manner	Phone at the least busy time of day
Motivation	Offer payment/dessert, shows respect
Follow-Through	Nephew mows lawn
Reward	Aunt has manicured lawn and is pleased, nephew has happy taste buds, a deeper relationship is formed

Exercise

Identify a need for your current cause and
craft a persuasive case

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Tips for Writing Well

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Tips

- Write as if you were conversing face-to-face with your donor
- Write from the perspective of the donor first, your cause or your organization, second
- Include “thank you” on every piece of mail sent. You can never thank enough
- Choose verbs over nouns when possible to keep the reader engrossed

Visual Persuasion

- Use fonts no smaller than 12
- Use bullets and lists often
- Line spacing
- Eye rest lillypads
- Sentences should be no longer than 2 lines
- Paragraphs should be no longer than 11 lines
- Be generous to the readers' eyes by using white space

Email Lines

Don't

allow lines to stretch the width of a terminal screen making it difficult for reader to scan and absorb.

Do

make lines five to six inches long.

On the Back of a Communication

Don't

leave the back of a communication blank without a message. It's a missed opportunity.

Do

use the back of a blank reply card, fact sheet, etc. to motivate action, leave contact information, or thank the reader for their response.

Be Specific About Goals

Don't

“Help children
read better.”

Do

“Your funding support
of \$___ means that
volunteers can mentor
___ children, a ___%
increase over last year,
resulting in reading
scores that jump by a
_____.”

Write in the Present Tense

Don't

"Three hundred children
were mentored
by volunteers last
year."

Do

"Thanks to your
support, trained
volunteers
are mentoring
300 children in
___ reading sessions in
the first ___ months of
this year...a ___%
increase over last year."

Write From a Positive Perspective

Don't

“To allay any concerns as to why our organization chose the strategy we did, please visit our website.”

Do

“As a valued stakeholder, your trust in this organization remains central to our mission. A volunteer will be contacting you soon to receive your input and answer any questions.”

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Questions?

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Webinars for AmeriCorps VISTAs

Writing with Clarity and Precision

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Today's Presenters



Alice Kallaugher and James McComas
Project Assistants
Campaign Consultation, Inc.

Academic vs. Professional Persuasive Writing

	Academic	Professional
Audience	Professors, students, other academics	Large companies, stakeholders, co-workers
Purpose	To demonstrate knowledge and argue a thesis	To get things done and make asks
Ownership	Writer	Company
Time	Long time for projects	Quick responses in a fast-paced environment
Process	Often in isolation	Solicit feedback from co-workers and supervisors
Content	All information needed to further thesis	Only what the audience needs to know
Style	Long, complex paragraphs that explain thoughts	Short, simple sentences that suggest action
Tone	Serious	Serious
Ideas	Well developed and structured	Well developed and structured

Writing for Different Formats

- Emails:
 - Concise
 - Clear about the 'ask'
 - Acknowledgment/ thanks
- Press Releases:
 - Including only necessary details (i.e. who/ what/ where/ when/ why)
- Grant Proposals/ Reports:
 - Technical language, while maintaining clarity
- Resumes
 - Logical order
 - Tailored to job description

The Importance of Clarity

If your writing cannot be understood, you might as well have written nothing.

Your writing should be:

- Concise
- Simple and straightforward
- Directed at a particular audience



How Not to Write


Over the past five years, a bold commitment has been made by Mary Baldwin College to help students comprehensively understand social innovation and develop social innovators. This commitment has been spearheaded by the Spencer Center for Civic and Global Engagement, opened in 2007 to promote civic engagement and innovation in a global context, and this commitment can be demonstrated in their great work. A unique six-semester hour service-learning course has been offered annually since 2009. In excess of a dozen guest lectures were developed, including a four-part speaker series on local social innovators that took place in the spring of 2009. Support was given for students to attend an innovation program in Virginia and the annual meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative University. Partnerships with socially innovative programs have been made, such as Kiva, an international micro-lending program and Beads for Life, an innovative nonprofit that sells beads to empower Ugandan women to eradicate poverty.

WordCloud Takeaways

- Avoid:
 - Overuse of certain words
 - Passive voice
- Pay attention to:
 - Adjectives



Activity: Hemingway App



Desktop Version

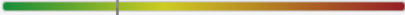
Like 28k

Tweet 3,878

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Write Edit

Readability



Grade 18

Bad

Paragraphs: 1
Sentences: 6
Words: 155
Characters: 863

2 of 6 sentences are hard to read.

3 of 6 sentences are very hard to read.

3 adverbs. Aim for 0 or fewer.

1 words or phrases can be simpler.

7 uses of passive voice. Aim for 1 or fewer.


Adverbs

Description: An adverb is a word that changes, modifies or simplifies a verb, adjective or another adverb. You should avoid using them to keep your verbs strong.

Example: Instead of “The boy ran quickly”, just say “The boy sprinted”

Quote: “I believe the road to hell is paved with adverbs, and I will shout it from the rooftops. To put it another way, they’re like dandelions. If you have one on your lawn, it looks pretty and unique. If you fail to root it out, however, you find five the next day . . . fifty the day after that . . . and then, my brothers and sisters, your lawn is totally, completely, and profligately covered with dandelions.” - Stephen King

Activity: Hemingway App



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Write Edit

Readability

Grade 17

Bad

Paragraphs: 1

Sentences: 6

Words: 155

Characters: 838

2 of 6 sentences are hard to read.

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0 adverbs. Aim for 0 or fewer.

1 words or phrases can be simpler.


7 uses of passive voice. Aim for 1 or fewer.

Passive Voice

Description: Passive voice is a grammatical construction that occurs when the object of the sentence appears as the subject. This means that something is being done to the subject, instead of the subject doing something to the object.

Example: Passive Voice: “The road was crossed by the chicken.”
Active Voice: “The chicken crossed the road.”

Activity: Hemingway App



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Over the past five years, Mary Baldwin College made a bold commitment to help students understand social innovation and develop social innovators. The Spencer Center for Civic and Global Engagement, opened in 2007, led this effort to promote civic engagement and innovation in a global context, and show this through their continued work. The center offered a unique six-semester hour service-learning course each year since 2009. They also developed in excess of a dozen guest lectures, including a four-part speaker series on local social innovators that took place in the spring of 2009. The center gave support to students to attend an innovation program in Virginia and the annual meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative University. They partnered with innovative social programs, such as Kiva, an international micro-lending program and Beads for Life, an innovative nonprofit that sells beads to empower Ugandan women to eradicate poverty.

Write Edit

Readability

Grade 17

Bad

Paragraphs: 1

Sentences: 6

Words: 146

Characters: 802

2 of 6 sentences are hard to read.

3 of 6 sentences are very hard to read.

0 adverbs. Aim for 0 or fewer.

1 words or phrases can be simpler.

0 uses of passive voice. Aim for 0 or fewer.

Use Simple Words

Description: Avoid using complex words and phrases. This will help ensure that your writing is accessible to most audiences.

Activity: Hemingway App



Desktop Version

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Write Edit

Readability

Grade 17

Bad

Paragraphs: 1

Sentences: 6

Words: 145

Characters: 800

2 of 6 sentences are hard to read.

3 of 6 sentences are very hard to read.

0 adverbs. Aim for 0 or fewer.

0 words or phrases can be simpler.

0 uses of passive voice. Aim for 0 or fewer.

Long and Hard to Read Sentences

Quote: “Employ a simple and straightforward style” - Mark Twain

Description: Break down run on sentences into their component parts. Separate your writing into short paragraphs that get to the point.

Activity: Hemingway App

Hemingway
App

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Over the past five years, Mary Baldwin College worked to help students understand and create social change. The Spencer Center for Civic and Global Engagement, opened in 2007, led this effort. Their goal is to get people involved at home and abroad.

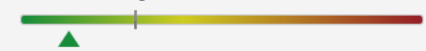
The center offered a new six-semester hour service-learning course each year since 2009. They also made more than a dozen guest lectures. This included a four-part speaker series in the spring of 2009 about several local projects.

The center helped students go to the Phoenix Project's Social Innovation Program. Students also went to the Clinton Global University.

They partnered with original social programs. One is Kiva, a program that lends money around the world. Another is Beads for Life, a nonprofit that sells beads to help Ugandan women end poverty.

✎ Write ✎ Edit

Readability



Grade 6

Good 📈

Paragraphs: 5
Sentences: 11
Words: 132
Characters: 679

0 of 11 sentences are hard to read.

0 of 11 sentences are very hard to read.

0 adverbs. Aim for 2 or fewer.

0 words or phrases can be simpler.

0 uses of passive voice. Aim for 0 or fewer.

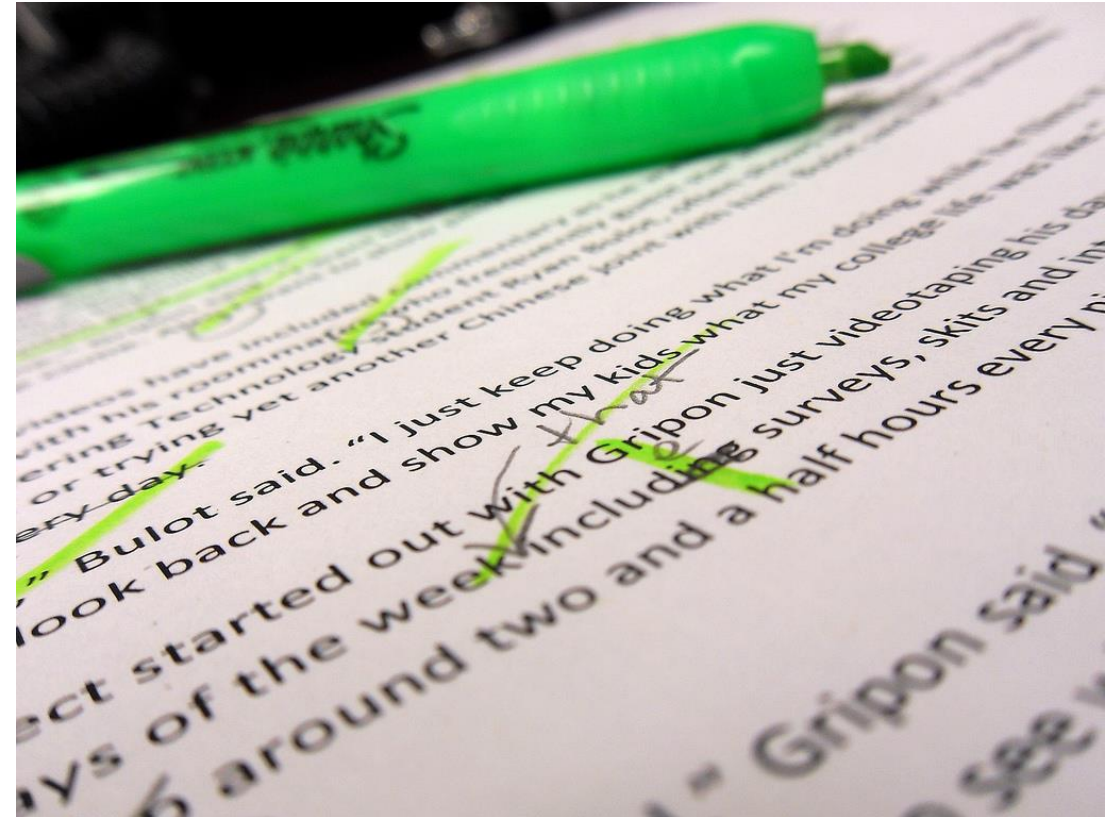
Hemingway App Takeaways

- Be wary of:
 - Adverbs
 - Passive voice
 - Long and difficult to read sentences, especially those with multiple clauses



Proofreading

- Step away
- Ask a friend
- Go over the document sentence by sentence
- Use a checklist
- Use spell checker (and remember it's not perfect!)



Next Steps

1. Identify your audience and goals.
2. Use the worksheet to outline the six elements of a persuasive message.
3. Craft your proposal, email, resume, etc.
4. Use the word cloud and the Hemingway App to ensure your content is precise.
5. Spend time proofreading using a detailed checklist.

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How to Ask Questions

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- To ask a question electronically, use the Q&A feature located in the bottom right corner
- To ask a question verbally, call in using the number on this slide and press *1.



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Evaluation

Webinars for AmeriCorps VISTAs

Please take a few moments to share your feedback. How can we improve these sessions? What topics should we include in future webinars?

Thank you very much for your time and participation!

Thank You for Your Participation!

Webinars for AmeriCorps VISTAs

If you have further questions or for more information,
contact us: VISTAwebinars@cns.gov

Writing Federal Resumes

July 22, 2014

2:00 – 3:30PM ET

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